

AUSTIN AIR, ERIE COUNTY & CONGRESSMAN HIGGINS ANNOUNCE ALL CLASSROOMS IN THE COUNTY NOW OUTFITTED WITH HEPA AIR PURIFIERS FOR NEW SCHOOL YEAR

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12,500 Austin Air units have been delivered to all public, private, and charter schools in Erie County after major federal investment through the American Rescue Plan

BUFFALO, NY (August 30, 2022) — Austin Air Systems was joined by Erie County officials and Congressman Brian Higgins (NY-26) to announce that it has fulfilled a massive, 12,500-unit order supported by American Rescue Plan funding, ensuring that every single student in the County will benefit from clean air this upcoming school year. The announcement was made with Dr. Rubie Harris, Assistant Superintendent with the Grand Island Central School District, at the Charlotte Sidway Elementary School, to show off the new units and discuss the positive impact this investment will have on the upcoming school year.

Erie County announced this spring that it would be using a portion of the \$180 million in federal COVID-19 relief funds made available through the American Rescue Plan to place HEPA purifiers in all public, private, and charter schools in the county. Austin Air finished delivering all units to schools in August, just in time for the start of the upcoming school year.

“We’re proud to bring our premier air cleaners to all schools in Erie County and provide peace of mind for more than 150,000 students and their families and teachers after two years of pandemic disruptions,” said Austin Air Systems president Lauren McMillan. “HEPA-purified air is linked to improved test scores and respiratory health for students, and it is our great honor to be able to provide an optimal learning environment for all children in our community.”

“This is a true American Rescue Plan investment success story. Healthier classrooms for local students and teachers thanks to high-tech equipment built by Western New York workers at Buffalo-based company Austin Air,” said Congressman Higgins. “Adaptations made by schools, teachers and families during the pandemic were nothing short of remarkable. Thanks to this investment, parents can breathe a little easier knowing added protections are in place as their children head back to school this year.”

Use of portable high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) purifiers is part of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) multi-layered approach to mitigating the transmission of COVID-19 and other airborne viruses. HEPA has proven to be 99.7% effective at capturing viral

particles associated with SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. This is especially important in places like schools where large groups of people remain indoors for prolonged periods of time, often in small spaces with little or no ventilation.

"Equipping all classrooms in Erie County with these air purifiers was a no-brainer," said Erie County Executive Mark Poloncarz. "The improvement of the ventilation systems in our schools will keep approximately 150,000 K-12 students, teachers, and support staff in Erie County safe and healthy by reducing the spread of COVID-19 and other airborne contagions. My team was thrilled to work with Austin Air Systems to coordinate the delivery and installation of these purifiers built right here in Erie County. I'd like to give a special thanks to the education leaders throughout the county who helped plan and implement this project, as well as Congressmen Higgins, and Senators Schumer and Gillibrand for awarding this critical funding through the American Rescue Plan."

"The last few years have been challenging for our students, teachers, and staff, so getting back to normal has been a priority," said Dr. Rubie Harris, Assistant Superintendent for Business and Finance with Grand Island Central School District. "While COVID has lessened and classroom restrictions have recently been relaxed, it's still having an impact on families in our district and across Erie County. Having this clean air technology in our classrooms is essential, and we're grateful to our local leaders for recognizing the need and making it happen."

In addition to the federal funding provided to states and local governments which allowed for Erie County's purchase of Austin Air HEPA filters, school districts received direct allocations of federal COVID relief. Grand Island School District received over \$2.6 million through the American Rescue Plan while districts across Erie County received a combined \$350 million. These resources are addressing learning gaps and helping to cover other expenses to improve the health and safety of students and teachers. Austin Air Systems is based in Buffalo, NY, with all units produced out of the world's largest air cleaner manufacturing facility in the world. Austin Air has shipped units to more than 100 countries.

Austin Air has worked with the U.S. government, FEMA, and the American Red Cross in response to the country's most challenging environmental emergencies. Its units were used after 9/11, Hurricane Katrina, Superstorm Sandy, the 2015 SoCal gas leak, and some of the worst wildfires on record. The company's HEPA technology has been studied by Johns Hopkins, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the University of Washington, and Franklin W. Olin College of Engineering.